

Message Text

SECRET

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3521

S E C R E T GENEVA 8977

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: MEETING WITH GAYLARD NOVEMBER 11

FOR SCHAUFLE FROM WISNER

REF: STATE 277223

1. I CALLED ON GAYLARD AS INSTRUCTED AND TOLD HIM THAT RICHARD PLANS TO PROCEED WITH CONSULTATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT ON A BILATERAL AND NOT A PLENARY BASIS. GAYLARD WAS RELIEVED. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE IDEA UP WITH ANTHONY DUFF BUT HAD NOT RECEIVED A CLEAR ANSWER AND APPRECIATED OUR HELP IN THE MATTER.

2. I THEN TOLD GAYLARD THAT WE ANTICIPATED THE TOP TIER OF A TWO TIER SYSTEM IS LIKELY TO PRODUCE A HEATED DEBATE. HE AGREED AND WHEN I ASKED HIM IF THE RHODESIANS WERE THINKING OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE QUESTION, HE SAID THAT THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT HAD NOT GONE VERY FAR. HE WAS SURE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE ALTERNATIVES TO THE CONCEPT OF A COUNCIL OF STATE WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE SALISBURY GOVERNMENT.

3. GAYLARD WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE NATIONALIST AND AFRICAN SUGGESTION THAT BRITAIN ASSUME A SUBSTANTIVE AS OPPOSED TO A REFEREE'S ROLE IN THE PERIOD OF

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TRANSITION WOULD ENCOUNTER STIFF RHODESIAN OPPOSITION,

IAN SMITH WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SELL IT TO THE RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT AND WOULD PROBABLY NOT TRY. THE AFRICANS HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, GAYLARD SAID, THEY CANNOT NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT WITH THE BRITISH. THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT HOLDS POWER, NOT THE BRITISH, AND THE RHODESIAN FRONT DOMINATES THE GOVERNMENT.

4. I DID NOT WANT TO ENCOURAGE GAYLARD TO PURSUE HIS REJECTION OF A BRITISH ROLE FURTHER AND MADE CLEAR THAT I WAS NOT PRESSING A BRITISH SOLUTION. I SAID I WAS ASKING ONLY THAT THE RHODESIANS GIVE THOUGHT TO ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS WHICH COULD BE ADVANCED AS THE NEGOTIATIONS MOVE FORWARD. GAYLARD SAID HE UNDERSTOOD MY POINT AND TOLD ME HE WOULD DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF OPTIONS WITH HIS MINISTERS AND THEN BE IN COMMUNICATION WITH SALISBURY.

5. BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO STAND THE NATIONALISTS DOWN ON THE QUESTIONS OF A MINISTERIAL PRESENCE IN GENEVA AND AGAIN ON THE INDEPENDENCE DATE HAD NOT GONE UNNOTICED IN SALISBURY, GAYLARD REMARKED. AT THE SAME TIME THE RHODESIANS ARE GREATLY CHEERED BY WHAT THEY SEE TO BE A CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC OPINION. HE MENTIONED A RECENT ANALYSIS IN THE RAND DAILY MAIL WHICH SHOWED THE DEGREE TO WHICH SOUTH AFRICANS WERE NOW PREPARED TO STAND BEHIND RHODESIA.

6. GAYLARD TOLD ME THAT SMITH HAD NOT FIXED A DATE TO RETURN TO GENEVA. HE HAD INDICATED TO HIS DELEGATION THAT IF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT MAKE PROGRESS AND SPECIFIC PROPOSALS EMERGE, SMITH WILL BE READY TO RETURN TO GENEVA AND TAKE CHARGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS DIRECTLY. ABRAMS

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